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ABSTRACT

A case study of the development of a time management workshop for adult learners at the University of Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) is presented. This workshop was designed because of the lack of appropriate support programs for adult learners. Many times, programs and materials created for traditional age students are inappropriate and impossible to adapt because of the underlying theoretical base on which they were developed. They address the academic, social, and emotional development of the 18- to 22-year-old population. Adult students have very different lives, a variety of concerns, a wealth of past experience, and multiple agendas. A major problem for them is time management. The two theories that encompass much of what was prevalent throughout the literature on adult learning are Knowles' Andragogical Model and Wlodkowski's Time Continuum Model of Motivation. These models portray adult learners as goal-oriented, internally-motivated, pragmatic individuals who are less likely than traditional age students to take risks in engaging in learning activities. The Time Management Workshop at the University of Pittsburgh is designed to help participants in the exploration, definition, and decision-making processes regarding problems and issues of time management. The workshop's goals are to help students with such things as stating long-term and short-term goals, tracing patterns of procrastination, and relating general memory principles to the effective use of time. The workshop is highly interactive with student interaction and discussion making up about 80% of the activity. It has been an overwhelming success with students reporting a more realistic sense of effective time management. Contains 10 references. (SM)

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Designing Support Programs for Adult Freshmen: A Case Study Using A Time Management Workshop

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Designing Support Programs for Adult Freshmen:
A Case Study Using A Time Management Workshop

Introduction

Many changes are taking place today on college campuses across the United States. One of the most visible changes is in the college population itself. Ten or fifteen years ago, adult students were not prevalent on campuses and comprised only a small non-traditional population. Today, the number of adult students on campus are ever increasing and virtually all campuses have had to address this changing clientele. The number of traditional-age college students (18-22 years old) continues to decline primarily because of varying birth rates. Although colleges have been affected by sagging enrollments due to the sharp drop in the pool of traditional-age students, they have kept enrollments up by expanding their recruitment efforts to include non-traditional populations. The U.S. Department of Education's Center for Educational Statistics reports that at the beginning of the 1980s, more than four million U.S. teenagers were in the 18 year-old bracket while in 1986, that figure dropped to 3.5 million teenagers in the 18 year-old bracket. As the pool of traditional age students to decreases, colleges will continue to recruit other more non-traditional populations such

as adults. It is estimated that by 1992, half of all college students will be over twenty-five years old and twenty percent will be over thirty-five years old. Cross (1981) notes that by the year 2000, the largest age group in America will be between thirty and forty-four years old. Adults come to college for a variety of reasons: single parents and displaced workers who wish to further their education in hopes of greater employability; women who married and raised families return to school once their children are grown; women who comprise a larger part of the workforce than ever before; individuals who seek continuing education in hopes of job advancement and to keep abreast in one's field.

Rationale

In working with increasing numbers of adults who are matriculated in a variety of Schools and Programs at the University of Pittsburgh, the authors became aware that existing student support programs and instructional materials which had been designed for traditional-age students were inappropriate. Many times these programs and materials were difficult or impossible to adapt because of the underlying theoretical base on which they were developed. The student support programs and materials addressed the academic, social, and emotional development of the 18 - 22 year-old population. Adult students had very different lives, a variety of concerns, a wealth of past experience, and multiple agendas (home and family

responsibilities, finances, job responsibilities, job displacement, mid-life career change, etc.) One of the most obvious differences that surfaced immediately was in the time management program. It was not realistic to discuss the prudent use of vast amounts of free time, especially decision-making regarding the use of weekend time and the emphasis on academic responsibilities almost exclusively. Most adult students truly had no free time. In fact, they had more to deal with than they could realistically handle.

In developing a time management workshop for adult students, we first went back to the literature on adult learning theory to determine what common characteristics or assumptions were inherent in an adult learner profile. Once the profile was developed, it provided implications for the design of student support programs and instructional materials which more successfully addressed the particular needs of adult learners.

In reviewing the literature on adult learning, Brundage (1980) noted three problematic areas:

(1) "A major difficulty in conceptualizing adult learner characteristics is that the concepts have a tendency to become fixed labels" (p.21).

(2) The literature available is lacking in identifying "specific adult learner characteristics and how they affect learner outcomes" (p.20).

(3) The literature available is lacking in the examination of how "specific adult learner characteristics change over time

in response to developmental changes in the learner or to changes in the environment" (p.22).

The two theories that encompassed much of what was prevalent throughout the literature were Knowles' (1980) Andragogical Model and Wlodkowski's (1985) Time Continuum Model of Motivation. These two theories provided implications for the design and development of the student support programs and instructional materials which were later developed. The first program which was developed was the time management workshop for adult learners.

The Andragogical Model

Malcolm Knowles (1980) first formulated his concept of the andragogical model in response to the more familiar concept of pedagogy. He defined pedagogy as " the art and science of teaching children" (p.37). As he examined the pedagogical model that most educators are familiar with, he found that it did not address the needs of adults. From this, Knowles conceptualized andragogy which he defined as " the art and science of helping adults learn" (p.37). Knowles prefers to think of the andragogical model as a part of the pedagogical model rather than as a theory unto itself. Knowles' Andragogical Model is based on five inherent assumptions which provide implications for the design and development of student support programs and instructional materials:

1. **The adult learner is self-directing.**

Adults learners are basically responsible individuals. They may feel resentful or even resistant, in a subconscious way, when they find themselves in situations where an outside force is imposing his/her will without seeking their participation. Also, when adults enter college, they tend to revert back to the conditioning of school as it was in their youth -- more teacher directed. This comes into conflict with the responsible, self-directing needs of adults.

Design Implication:

This assumption implies that even though adults are generally self-directing in every part of their lives, they tend to become passive when they re-enter the classroom. Attention to the unique nature of self direction in adults should be given, for example, an orientation to self-direction is necessary at the beginning of the learning activity. Adult students need to learn how to apply some of the same planning and evaluation skills that they use in life situations to the learning environment. The responsibility and self-direction of adults should be acknowledged from the onset in design and implementation, through inclusion as part of the learning activity and recognition as a standard in learning.

2. **The adult learner enters the educational environment with more life experience and a greater variety of life experience.**

Because adults have lived longer, they have generally accumulated a greater amount of experience and gained more of a variety of experience through their multiple roles in society as family member, member of the community, and member of a certain occupation, etc. The experiences they have acquired through their multiple roles and the personal introspection that they have sometimes achieved are all part of what they bring with them to the learning environment.

Design Implication:

This assumption implies the need for a greater emphasis in using instructional strategies and methods which will allow adult learners to bring their experience into the educational activity. Strategies such as group discussion, simulations, and problem-solving activities have been successful in using adult learners as resources for one another. Because the variety of experiences differ in adults, it may also be helpful to use individual learning plans and learning contracts with them.

In addition, adults have a self-identity firmly in place and with it may have prejudices and preconceptions with regard to their approaches in learning. So, while self-identity

should be valued, educators may also need to find ways of helping adult learners become more open-minded.

3. **The adult learner is ready to learn when there is a need to know something or to do something in order to perform more effectively in some aspect of life.**

Since adults are primarily self-directing, readiness to learn is a more individualized phenomenon with them than with traditional students. Readiness to learn may be a result of death of a family member or friend, divorce, loss of job, change of residence, etc.

Design Implication:

This assumption implies that educators should present adult learners with more effective role models and with the diagnostic systems needed to determine gaps in learning and interests in learning.

4. **The adult learner enters an educational activity with a life-centered, task-centered, or problem-centered orientation.**

Adults primarily attack a learning activity as a means to an end. They need to, at the end of the activity, be able to do something better, solve a problem, or feel that they have learned something that will help them to live a

better life. They are pragmatic and like to be able to apply what they learn.

Design Implication:

The assumption implies that learning activities should be organized around realistic life situations, rather than traditional learning units. Traditional learning units revolve around content transmission and encourage passivity. In traditional learning units, the teacher organizes the content in the way that he/she believes it should be learned. In the Andragogical Model, the teacher is viewed more as a facilitator and manager of learning. Educators should make sure that they begin the learning activity with a connection to real-life situations or circumstances and throughout the learning activity, reference should be made to individual or group real-life situations. The literature also suggests the development of short, intensive learning experiences.

5. **The adult learner is primarily internally motivated.**

The traditional Pedagogical Model implies that children are more externally motivated than adults. They respond to external pressures from parents, teachers, and peers. Although adults will respond to some external motivators for learning, a salary increase or another job, for example, they tend to be primarily internally motivated. Self-esteem,

greater self actualization and a better quality of life for themselves are internal motivators. Even with the external motivators that they respond to, adults still have usually internalized a personal reason for wanting to learn something.

Design Implication:

This assumption implies that in design student support programs and instructional materials, educators must build in internal motivators for adult students. Even the marketing of the programs should be geared to internal motivation.

The Time Continuum Model of Motivation

Like Knowles, Wlodkowski (1985) portrays adult learners as goal-oriented, internally-motivated, pragmatic individuals who are less likely than traditional age students to take risks in engaging in learning activities. Most importantly, though, Wlodkowski believes that the motivation to learn, for adult students, depends primarily on their needs and expectations at a given time in the learning process, and that the motivators to learn are internal. His Time Continuum Model of Motivation focuses on the internal motivators of adults. He refers to these internal motivators as needs. Wlodkowski defines a need as " a condition expressed by the individual as an internal force that leads the person to move in the direction of a goal" (p.17). The

Time Continuum Model of Motivation consists of three timeframes in the learning process: the needs of adult students at the beginning of the learning process, during the learning process, and at the end of the learning process. From these needs, Wlodkowski suggests instructional behaviors and strategies that might be used. The following represents a sample of the instructional behaviors and strategies that he recommends.

1. At the beginning of the learning process, the instructor should:

   A. determine and establish positive learner attitudes.

   Attitudes toward the instructor, the subject or learning process itself, and learner self-concept should be addressed at this time. Establishing positive attitudes can be facilitated through the following:

   (1) Appropriate self-disclosure - sharing something of value to you with your adult learners.

   (2) Concretely indicating your cooperation to assist the adult learner in the learning process.

   (3) Allowing for introductions.

   (4) Giving rationales for mandatory assignments or requirements.

   (5) Eliminating or minimizing any negative conditions that surround the subject or erroneous beliefs that may underlie a negative learner attitude.

(6) Promote learner's personal control over the context of learning.

(7) Make learning goals as clear as possible

(8) Use goal-setting methods

B. determine and address learner needs.

Learners may have needs of safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Adult needs should be respected and satisfied. Instruction which is responsive to learner needs at this time can be facilitated through the following:

(1) Use needs assessment techniques to discover and emphasize felt needs of learners in the learning process.

(2) When relevant, select content, examples, and projects that relate to the expressed needs of adult learners.

(3) Use imagery techniques to help adult learners clearly remember specific tasks or problems that are relevant to the knowledge or skills being taught.

(4) Create a learning environment that is organized and orderly.

(5) Create components of learning that tell learners that they are accepted and respected.

(6) Provide learners with the opportunity to select

projects, topics, and assignments that appeal to their curiosity and need to explore.

(7) Allow learners to publicly display their knowledge and skills.

2. During the learning process, the instructor should:

A. provide stimulation to learners.

At this time, the instructor should aim to maintain learner attention and build learner interests. Learners should be involved in the learning process as much as possible. This can be facilitated through the following:

(1) Provide frequent response to all learners on an equitable basis.

(2) Provide variety in personal presentation style, methods of instruction, and learning materials.

(3) Introduce, connect, and end learning activities attractively and clearly.

(4) When possible, clearly state the advantages that will result from the learning activity.

(5) Selectively use analogies, metaphors, examples, and stories.

(6) Use unpredictability and uncertainty to the degree that learners enjoy them with a sense of security.

(7) While instructing, use humor liberally and frequently.

B. ensure a positive affective experience and emotional climate.

Learners need encouragement and assistance from the instructor in integrating their emotions within the learning process. At this time, the instructor needs to ensure a positive emotional climate by using methods and strategies that emphasize cooperation and maximize learner involvement and sharing. This can be facilitated through the following:

(1) Selectively emphasize and deal with the human perspective of what is being learned, with application to the personal daily lives of adult learners when possible.

(2) When appropriate, relate content and instructional procedures to learner concerns.

(3) When appropriate, encourage and deal with the expression of learner emotions during learning.

(4) When appropriate, help learners to experience cognitive concepts on a physical and emotional level.

(5) Selectively relate content and instructional procedures to learner values.

3. At the end of the learning process, the instructor should:

A. reaffirm feelings of competence.

To feel a sense of competence, the learner must be aware of his/her progress, the mastery of learning, and responsibility in learning. A sense of competence enhances the learner's confidence, self-determination, and intrinsic motivation. This can be facilitated by the following:

(1) Use formative evaluation procedures (during the learning process) to measure and communicate progress and mastery to students.

(2) Whenever possible, use performance evaluation procedures to help the learner realize how to apply what has been learner to daily living.

(3) Acknowledge and affirm learner's responsibility and significant actions that contributed to the successful completion of the learning task.

B. provide reinforcement.

At this time, the instructor must acknowledge the positive changes that learning has produced and affirm and continue motivation for application and future of learning. This can be facilitated through the following:

(1) Use incentives to encourage adult participation in learning activities that are initially unattractive.

(2) When learning has natural consequences, help learner to be aware of them as well as their impact.

(3) Encourage or provide a reinforcing event for positive closure at the end of a learning activity.

The Time Management Workshop

The time management workshop for adult learners was developed by the authors in response to the need for this type of programming on the University of Pittsburgh campus. It was the

first implemented in 1985 for the College of General Studies (the evening college) and then later adapted for both the University External Studies Program (an undergraduate external degree program) and the Pitt Informal Program (a non-credit leisure learning program.) Although the target groups differed somewhat and required minor adaptations, the underlying theory on which the adult programming was developed was the same.

The overall goal of the workshop was to assist participants in the exploration, definition, and decision-making processes regarding problems and issues of time management which were unique to their individual life situation. in relation to this, the following terminal objectives were established for the workshop:

After attending the time management workshop, students should be able to:

(1) state their long-term and short-term goals.

(2) trace their patterns of procrastination.

(3) select effective time management strategies to combat procrastination.

(4) relate general memory principles to the effective use of time.

(5) organize and prioritize assignments and commitments related to home, office, course work, etc.

(6) make decisions about and construct an optimal time/study schedule, by using problem-solving strategies.

The workshop was four to six hours in length and was usually held on a Saturday morning because this was determined to be the best time according to the participants' schedules. Most of the participants worked during the day and took evening classes or had other evening responsibilities. The workshop could also be offered in the early evening, depending upon student needs. The optimal time in the term to offer the time management workshop was found to be two or three weeks into the new term. This afforded participants the opportunity to determine the demands of the term, if they were students,and also allowed them time to establish a time use pattern, however, it was still early enough in the term to make adaptations.

The workshop is highly interactive. Student interaction and discussion make up approximately eighty percent of the work shop activity. In using Knowles' Assumptions of Andragogy and Wlodkowski's Time Continuum Model of Motivation, the instructors establish positive student attitudes by sharing appropriate self-disclosure, by eliminating negative feelings and erroneous beliefs about time management, and by promoting the learner's personal control over their situation. Participants are encouraged, throughout the workshop, to relate, question, and discuss the content of the workshop as it is pertinent to their individual situations. Students begin the workshop by describing their concerns or problems about time management. Those examples are alluded to throughout the workshop and when relewvant, workshop content is emphasized to certain individuals who have

expressed particular needs in that area. This also enables the instructors to provide frequent and equitable responses to the participants.

The time management workshop addresses the affective dimensions of the time management process as well as the cognitive dimensions. Learners need encouragement and assistance from the instructors in integrating their emotions within the learning process. To do this, the instructors selectiveely emphasize what is being learned in the workshop with application to the participants' daily lives. The instructors also acknowledge and affirm participant's responsibility and significant actions that contributed to the successful completion of learning tasks in the workshop.

A variety of learning materials are used in the workshop. Most have been adapted from exercises used in counseling situations and from readings on time management. Students do not hand in any of their worksheets. They are encouraged to use the worksheets for their own review and to make notes which can later be used in re-examining their goals.

Evaluation of the workshop is both formative (as the workshop continues) and summative (at the end of the workshop). Formative evaluation helps the instructors to adjust the contant and focus the workshop where needed. For example, in some situations, the topic of procrastination and methods to combat procrastination have been a primary interest, while in other workshops, the focus has been on prioritizing tasks and setting

up a schedule. The summative evaluation is collected in two ways: a discussion at the end of the workshop and a written anonymous evaluation. The discussion provides an opportunity for instructors to determine how well participants have been able to achieve their goals and to provide closure to the learning activity. The survey provides feedback to instructors regarding selection of content, methods, materials and to determine if the structure of the workshop addressed the individual participants' needs.

The time management workshop has been an overwhelming success. Students report that they have a more realistic sense of what effective time management is and they gain skills which enable them to organize and prioritize more effectively. Specifically, students report the they are more aware of their personal style of managing time and most importantly, misusing time. Students also like the small-group, interactive sessions and the direct application to their own lives.

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